

# United States Air Force Fact Sheet

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## OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL

The Officer Training School (OTS) mission is to train and commission quality officers for the United States Air Force. OTS was organized at Medina Annex, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in 1959. Its predecessor, the Officer Candidates School (OCS) was established in 1942 in Miami Beach, Florida, and its mission was to train and commission members from the enlisted ranks. OCS moved to Lackland in the spring of 1944 and gained the additional mission of training officers directly from civilian status in September 1951. OCS closed its doors with its last graduation in June 1963.

The first OTS class was comprised of 89 trainees, including 11 women. Production numbers have varied over the years from 323 the first year to 7,894 in FY67. The school moved to Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, in September 1993 as part of the Air Force chief of staff's vision to align all officer education/training programs under Air University.

OTS staff consists of approximately 130 Air Force officers, enlisted personnel and civilians. An Air Force colonel commands OTS. OTS is divided into a training support squadron that is responsible for drill and ceremonies, physical conditioning, expeditionary readiness, sick-call, scheduling, personnel, logistics and technology support to all of OTS and two training squadrons: one for Basic Officer



Training and one for Commissioned Officer Training.

### Basic Officer Training

The purpose of Basic Officer Training (BOT) is to train and commission second lieutenants in response to Active Duty Air Force and Air Force Reserve requirements, in partnership with the U.S. Air Force Academy and Air Force ROTC, the other members of the Air Force officer production triad. OTS is often referred to as the officer production triad's "flexible partner." OTS production numbers fluctuate in response to variations between projected and actual Air Force Academy and Air Force ROTC officer accessions, and Air Force end strength requirements.

The BOT program consists of 12 weeks of military instruction for college graduates leading to commissions as second lieutenants. The goal of this training is to instill high

standards of conduct and provide officer candidates with the essential military knowledge and skills needed for effective performance.

To ensure OTS graduates have the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective Air Force junior officers, OTS staff members provide instruction and guidance in curriculum areas such as leadership studies, professional knowledge, communication skills, military studies and field leadership applications.

OTS presents these areas concurrently, emphasizing teambuilding, followership and knowledge acquisition during the first half of training and leadership application during the second half. Lectures, readings, guided discussions, classroom exercises, field leadership exercises and after hours training activities combine to provide graduates with a broad and in-depth understanding of their role as commissioned officers in the U.S. Air Force.

OTS is, above all, a leadership laboratory. One of the highlights of which is the Leadership Reaction Course, a field exercise using a specialized obstacle course where small groups of students practice handling stress in situations that test their ability to reason quickly and lead effectively. The program also features an "Air Expeditionary Force Exercise," a capstone field leadership assessment exercise, in which students demonstrate their ability to integrate and apply the communication and leadership skills learned throughout the course.

Officer Training School's motto is "Always With Honor," which is reflected by the students' honor code: "I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate among us anyone who does." The code is a standard of personal conduct for each officer trainee. OTS expects each graduate to adopt the code as the minimum ethical standard to be maintained throughout his or her career.

### **Leadership Studies**

Trainees receive instruction on the fundamentals of leadership and team building; leadership styles, management principles, time management, goal setting, scientific problem

solving, group dynamics, counseling skills, accountability, and ethics. Threaded throughout the course are lectures and exercises that introduce and reinforce the principles of officership, authority and responsibility of officers, the Honor Code, standards of conduct, and the Air Force Core Values.

### **Professional Knowledge**

This curriculum area emphasizes the skills and knowledge unique to commissioned service. Topics include dress and appearance, customs and courtesies, special and additional duties, military law, professional and unprofessional relationships, educational opportunities, pay and allowances, survival and retirement benefits, officer evaluations and career progression, and such social actions issues as managing diversity, equal opportunity and treatment, sexual harassment/assault, and substance abuse.

### **Communication Skills**

Communication Skills classes are designed to develop the prospective officer's ability to speak more effectively, write more clearly and listen more efficiently. The communication curriculum includes communication skills foundations, writing for results, briefing techniques, and Air Force publications and staff work.

### **Military Studies and International Security Studies**

Every officer is expected and required to have a broad knowledge of the U. S. Air Force. Such knowledge includes origin and development, mission and purpose, doctrine, organization, position in the national military establishment, customs, and more.

This curriculum area is designed to provide students basic knowledge of Air Force history and heritage, the nature and laws of armed conflict, U.S. internal and foreign policies and national security issues, the organization and function of the Department of Defense and the

Air Force, employment of aerospace forces, and strategic issues for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Leadership Instruction and Application**

Each trainee is given the opportunity to apply leadership theory and techniques throughout the program. This area provides practical application in three areas: leadership training, military discipline, and physical conditioning. This is accomplished through field leadership activities, including the Air Expeditionary Force Exercise and others, teaching drill and ceremonies, uniform standards and military customs and courtesies classes. Physical fitness is assessed through a series of physical fitness tests. Trainees prepare for the tests by daily participation in organized fitness training.

### **Flight Commanders**

The Flight Commander (Flt/CC) is a key factor in the overall success of the OTS program. Flt/CCs have the most frequent interaction with the students and oversee their training and development. They conduct the classroom instruction and provide feedback to each trainee in field leadership activities and through periodic assessments.

Similarly, Flt/CCs counsel students to help them learn from mistakes, and apply their operational experiences to give focus and meaning to the abstract lessons provided in the classroom. And, perhaps most importantly, Flt/CCs, by virtue of their unique vantage points, serve as the control function in the OTS mission of commissioning "quality" officers.

### **Commissioning**

Once BOT trainees complete all OTS requirements they are administered the Oath of Office and commissioned (on extended active duty) as second lieutenants in the U.S. Air Force.

Most newly commissioned lieutenants will attend a technical school after Officer Training

School. Technical training subject areas include flying training, space and missile operations, and several support career fields. The length of these schools varies according to the specialty.

### **Commissioned Officer Training**

Commissioned Officer Training (COT) is a four-and-a-half-week program that provides initial officership training for Air Force judge advocates, chaplains, medical officers (doctors, nurses, dentists, biomedical science corps officers, and hospital administrators), and medical scholarship recipients. COT is located on the OTS campus at Maxwell AFB.

The program began in September 1996 and combined three courses: Air Force Officer Orientation Course, Health Professions Officer Indoctrination Course, and Military Indoctrination for Medical Services Officers Course.

The COT training program covers the same subject areas as Basic Officer Training. However the curriculum is more compact than BOT due to the shorter length of the program.

Students are commissioned prior to training. The military rank of COT students is awarded based on the student's professional credentials in their respective fields. COT ranks typically range from second lieutenants to lieutenant colonels. COT provides military training for about 1,500 officers annually.

Upon completion of the course, judge advocate and chaplain students normally attend career specialty schools offered at Maxwell Air Force Base. Medical scholarship recipients report back to various medical schools located throughout the country, and most medical service officers report to their operational units throughout the world. Some medical officers will attend specialized training before reporting to their units. COT conducts training for the active duty, guard and reserve.

### **OTS Campus**

Construction began in March 1998 on a \$72 million Officer Training School campus. Completion of the new OTS parade field and

reviewing stand complex will complete construction. The current campus has two academic buildings with two auditoriums, four dormitories, a dining facility and fitness center. Adjacent to the campus are a running track,

parade field, volleyball courts, and flickerball fields.

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